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State Fire Marshal Launches Fire Prevention Week, October 5-11, 2008
Asks Residents to Help Prevent Fires in the Home

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan, in launching Fire Prevention Week, asks residents to check and make sure that their homes are fire safe environments. Coan said, "This year's theme 'Prevent Home Fires' reminds us how important it is to find and fix fire hazards in the home." He said, "The place where we spend most of our time should be a sanctuary of safety and not a cause of concern."

According to data from the Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS), there were 33,522 fires reported in Massachusetts during 2007 causing 61 civilian deaths, 3 fire-related fire service deaths, 394 civilian injuries, 675 firefighter injuries and an estimated \$287 million in property damage.

The Massachusetts fire service is committed to ensuring the safety and security of all those living in and visiting our state and fire is a serious public safety concern both locally and nationally. Homes are the locations where people are at greatest risk from fire. In Massachusetts in 2007, there were 13,441 residential building fires.

State Fire Marshal Coan offers the following tips for preventing home fires:

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food.
- If there is a smoker in the house, designate a smoking area outside the home.
- Test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors once a month and change the batteries twice a year.
- Have your family practice your home fire escape plan twice a year.
- Keep matches and lighters in a locked cabinet where children cannot reach them.
- Make sure your electrical cords are in good condition and not frayed or cracked.
- Have your wiring inspected every 10 years to make sure that it is adequate to your needs.
- Keep portable space heaters at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn.
- Have your chimneys cleaned and inspected before each heating season.

For more information about fire safety or preventing home fires, contact your local fire department, the Department of Fire Services at www.mass.gov/dfs or 1-877-9 NO-FIRE (1-877-966-3473), or the National Fire Protection Association at www.nfpa.org.

Commemorating a Conflagration

Fire Prevention Week was established to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire, the tragic 1871 conflagration that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures and burned more than 2,000 acres. The fire began on October 8, but continued into and did most of its damage on October 9, 1871.

About the Department of Fire Services (DFS):

The State Fire Marshal heads the Department of Fire Services, the sole agency within state government responsible for overall coordination of fire service policy and operations. Specially trained State Police are assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal to conduct fire and explosion investigations. The mission of the Department of Fire Services is to provide the people of Massachusetts the ability to create safer communities through coordinated training, education, prevention, investigation, emergency response and leadership.